

By *makas choshech* the Torah says “לא ראו איש את אחיו” A person did not see his brother” (Bo 10:23). The Chidushei Harim zt”l explained that when one doesn’t see his brother and his fellow man, it is the worst form of darkness.

Pharaoh tried to destroy the yidden’s peace of mind. The Mesilas Yescharim (פרק ב') writes “This is one of the yetzer hara’s tricks and crafty ways: He causes people to be very occupied and busy so they don’t have a moment to think about where they are headed. The yetzer hara knows that if people would think about these matters, even just a little bit, they would begin to regret their deeds. Their remorse would increase until they leave the sin entirely. This was Pharaoh Harasha’s strategy when he said, “תכבד העבודה על האנשים...” (שמות ה' ט'). His goal was... constant work would prevent them from thinking. The yetzer hara does the same to people.

When the yidden began talking about leaving מצרים, Pharaoh increased the work load. As it says “לא תאסיפון לתת תבן ללבון הלבנים כתמול שלשום” We will no longer give straw for the nation to make bricks, as we’ve done yesterday and the day before that. הם ילכו ויקששו להם תבן ואת מתכנת הלבנים אשר הם עושים תמול [Now] they must gather the straw themselves, and still, they will be required to produce the same quota of bricks as before... (ה' ו-ח) He required them to work even harder, “ואל ישעו בדברי שקר” and they should not speak foolishness” (ח' ט'). The increased labor will prevent them from thinking about redemption.

In the word לא תאסיפון there is an extra “א” which indicates אסיפה, gathering. Rebbe Dovid of Lelov explained that part of Pharaoh’s decree was that the yidden should be unable to gather and get together (due to the lack of time). Pharaoh understood that when yidden get together they strengthen one another with words of Emunah and Bitachon, This would prevent Pharaoh from gaining control over them.

The way Klal Yisroel treats one another is the way the umos haolum will treat them. The way Klal Yisroel treats one another is the way Hakodosh Boruch Hu will

treat Klal Yisroel. This point is brought out beautifully by the Vilna Gaon zt"l. The posuk says "speak to the Bnei Yisroel and borrow a man From His friend רעהו and a women from her friend רעותה silver and gold keilim. Questions the Gaon, the gemara in Bava Kama excludes from the word רעהו an ox of a jew which gores the ox of a goy. A goy is not רעהו ! How could the torah call a mitzri רעהו . Secondly, he asks. Later the posuk tells us "And the Bnei Yisroel Did like the words of Moshe. And they borrowed from the Egyptions silver and gold keilim and garments. This time it omits the word רעהו . Furthermore, he questions the words of Rashi which says "כדבר משה" שאמר להם במצרים וישאלו איש מאת רעהו like the words of Moshe who instructed them in mitzrayim to borrow from their friend ect. What is Rashi adding? Is it not the simple meaning of the posuk.

Answers the Vilna Gaon. Earlier Moshe Rabeinu was telling klal Yisroel, if you want the goyim to open their hearts and lend you silver and gold then you amongst yourselves must do so as well. When there is chesed amongst the yidden then the goyim will also be kind to the Jews. This is what Rashi adds - The Bnei Yisroel did like the words of Moshe in Mitzrayim and they loaned to one another - "וד' נתן חן העם" רעהו" and thus they were able to borrow from the Egyptions. בעיני מצרים הישאלום Even more then they requested they were given.

Hashem treats us like we treat others. This embodies the bris that they committed themselves to each other, to do chesed and give chizuk, and this earned them the merit of redemption.